

United States Postal Service

§ 255.4

(b) The standards relating to electronic and information technology expressed here are intended to be consistent with the standards announced by the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board on December 21, 2000. Those standards are codified at 36 CFR part 1194.

§ 255.2 Definitions.

(a) *Agency* as used in this part means the Postal Service.

(b) *Area/functional vice president* also includes his or her designee.

(c) *Electronic and information technology (EIT)* includes “information technology” and any equipment or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment that is used in the creation, conversion, or duplication of data or information. The term does not include any equipment that contains embedded information technology that is used as an integral part of the product, but the principal function of which is not the acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching, interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information.

(d) *Formal complaint* means a written statement that contains the complainant’s name, address, and telephone number; sets forth the nature of the complainant’s disability; and describes the agency’s alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the agency of the nature of the alleged violation of section 504 or of section 508. It shall be signed by the complainant or by someone authorized to do so on the complainant’s behalf.

(e) *Individual with a disability*. For purposes of this part, “individual with a disability” means any person who:

(1) Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of such person’s major life activities;

(2) Has a record of such an impairment; or

(3) Is regarded as having such an impairment.

(f) *Information technology* means any equipment, or interconnected system or subsystem of equipment, that is used in the automatic acquisition, storage, manipulation, management, movement, control, display, switching,

interchange, transmission, or reception of data or information.

(g) *Postal manager*. As used in this part, “postal manager” means the manager or official responsible for a service, facility, program, or activity.

(h) *Qualified individual with a disability*. For purposes of this part, “qualified individual with a disability” means:

(1) With respect to any Postal Service program or activity under which a person is required to perform services or to achieve a level of accomplishment, an individual with a disability who meets the essential eligibility requirements and who can achieve the purpose of the program or activity without modifications in the program or activity that the agency can demonstrate would result in a fundamental alteration in its nature; or

(2) With respect to any other program or activity, an individual with a disability who meets the essential eligibility requirements for participation in, or receipt of benefits from, that program or activity.

(i) *Section 501* means section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Section 501 is codified at 29 U.S.C. 791.

(j) *Section 504* means section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Section 504 is codified at 29 U.S.C. 794.

(k) *Section 508* means section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Section 508 is codified at 29 U.S.C. 794d.

(l) *Undue burden* means significant difficulty or expense.

(m) *Vice President and Consumer Advocate* also includes his or her designee.

§ 255.3 Nondiscrimination under any program or activity conducted by the Postal Service.

In accordance with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, no qualified individual with a disability shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under, any program or activity conducted by the Postal Service.

§ 255.4 Accessibility to electronic and information technology.

(a) In accordance with section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Postal

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Service shall ensure, absent an undue burden, that the electronic and information technology the agency procures allows:

(1) Individuals with disabilities who are Postal Service employees or applicants to have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to the access to and use of information and data by Postal Service employees or applicants who are not individuals with disabilities; and

(2) Individuals with disabilities who are members of the public seeking information or services from the Postal Service to have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to the access to and use of information and data by members of the public who are not individuals with disabilities.

(b) When procurement of electronic and information technology that meets the standards published by the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board would pose an undue burden, the Postal Service shall provide individuals with disabilities covered by paragraph (a) of this section with the information and data by an alternative means of access that allows the individuals to use the information and data.

§ 255.5 Employment.

No qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be subjected to discrimination in employment with the Postal Service. The definitions, requirements, and procedures of section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as established by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 29 CFR part 1614 shall apply to employment within the Postal Service.

§ 255.6 Complaint procedures.

(a) *Applicability.* Except as provided in paragraph (b)(1) of this section, this section applies to all section 504 allegations of discrimination based upon disability in the programs or activities conducted by the Postal Service. Except as provided in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, this section applies to all allegations of section 508 violations.

(b) *Employment complaints.* (1) The Postal Service shall process complaints of employees and applicants alleging

violations of section 504 with respect to employment according to the procedures established by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 29 CFR part 1614 pursuant to section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 791. In accordance with 29 CFR part 1614, the Postal Service has established procedures for processing complaints of alleged employment discrimination, based upon disability, in the agency's Handbook EL-603, *Equal Employment Opportunity Complaint Processing*.

(2) The agency shall process complaints of employees and applicants alleging violations of section 508 and involving employment in accordance with the section 508 procedures which have been added to Handbook EL-603. Section 508 complaints shall be processed to provide the remedies required by section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

(c) *Complaints by members of the public.* Any individual with a disability who believes that he or she has been subjected to discrimination prohibited by this part or by the alleged failure of the agency to provide access to electronic and information technology may file a complaint by following the procedures described in this section. A complainant shall first exhaust informal administrative procedures before filing a formal complaint.

(1) *Informal complaints relating to Postal Service programs or activities and to EIT.*

(i) A complainant initiates the informal process by informing the responsible postal manager orally or in writing of the alleged discrimination or inaccessibility of Postal Service programs, activities, or EIT. Postal managers or employees who receive informal complaints that they lack the authority to resolve must promptly refer any such informal complaint to the appropriate postal manager, and at the same time must notify the complainant of the name, address, and telephone number of the person handling the complaint.

(ii) *Resolution of the informal complaint and time limits.* Within 15 days of receipt of the informal complaint, the responsible postal manager must send